



Newsletter for English Teachers

About the USA – Virtual Classroom

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G8 – 35th Group of Eight Annual Meeting

The leaders of the Group of Eight major industrialized economies meet annually at the G-8 Summit. The focus of the 2009 summit in [L'Aquila, Italy](#) (July 8 to 10) is on efforts to promote global economic recovery and to build a consensus for financial reforms. [More](#)

The [Group of Eight](#) was created by France in 1975 as an informal forum for the six largest industrialized economies of the Northern Hemisphere – Britain, France, West Germany, Italy, Japan and the U.S. In 1975, French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing called the leaders of the other five countries to a summit to discuss the repercussions of the 1973 oil crisis and global recession. They decided to hold the meetings annually, with each nation taking a turn to serve as host and chair. The EU is represented at the meetings, but does not act as host. Canada joined the group in 1976 to make it the G-7. When Russia became a member in 1997, it became the G-8.

This year's Summit and related meetings includes leaders from emerging and African economies and members of the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate while at L'Aquila.

United States and Russia

President Obama recently visited Moscow for a summit with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and a new start.

A Hopeful Reset: President Obama Addresses the Students of the Class of 2009 during their Graduation, New Economic School in Moscow ([Transcript](#), July 7): Saying there is "extraordinary potential for increased cooperation between Americans and Russians," President Obama called for a partnership between the nations to fight terrorism, halt the spread of nuclear arms and promote democracy during a commencement speech at Moscow's New Economic School:

"In 2009, a great power does not show strength by dominating or demonizing other countries. The days when empires could treat sovereign states as pieces on a chess board are over. [...] given our interdependence, any world order that tries to elevate one nation or one group of people over another will inevitably fail. The pursuit of power is no longer a zero-sum game -- progress must be shared.

That's why I have called for a "reset" in relations between the United States and Russia. This must be more than a fresh start between the Kremlin and the White House -- though that is important and I've had excellent discussions with both your President and your Prime Minister. It must be a sustained effort among the American and Russian people to identify mutual interests, and expand dialogue and cooperation that can pave the way to progress."

Key U.S.–Russian Summits - U.S. and Soviet/Russian leaders have met 56 times since 1985 [...]. Over the years, engagement between the two countries remained high and focused on mutual interests and cooperation as much as on disagreements and conflict. [Photo Gallery](#)



Obama in Russia: A New Start

President Obama's Agenda for U.S.–Russian Relations - [These key transcripts, texts, official fact sheets, articles](#) provide background & insight

President Obama in Ghana

The President & Mrs. Obama visit Accra from July 10 to 11. While in Ghana, President Obama will discuss a range of bilateral and regional issues with Ghanaian President Mills.

The President's Visit to Ghana Will Be Historic [Ass. Secretary of State Johnnie Carson speaks with America.gov](#): He says it recognizes the progress Ghana has made — particularly in the area of democratization — which serves as an "example to the rest of Africa." These [transcripts and America.gov articles](#) provide background on President Obama's policy agenda in Africa.

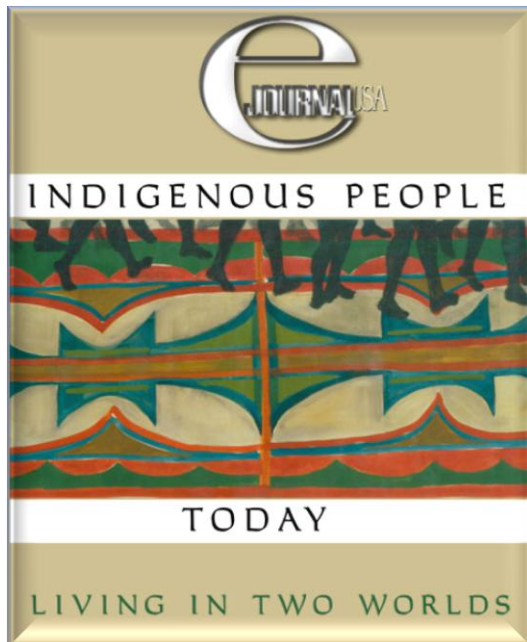
SPEECH: President Obama Live from Accra, Ghana – July 11, 17:00 (Co.Nx on Facebook)

Senator Obama's Visit to Seven African Nations in 2006 - These [photos](#) highlights his personal and political interest in the Africa region.

Dear Teachers,
Please note that this is the summer edition of our newsletter. We will be back with a "back to school" edition in September. In the meantime, we'd very much appreciate your input. [Please send us your comments and suggestions.](#) Thank you!



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Indigenous People: The June 2009 edition of eJournal USA provides insight into Native Americans and other indigenous peoples. Articles provide historical background and look at issues surrounding their languages and culture, their legal status, and how they are networking around the world. [View PDF \(2.78 MB\)](#)

Introducing



All the News That's Fit to Use - Ten Ways to Do Research With The New York Times: "Whether your topic is [the Great Depression](#) or [great books](#), [outer space](#) or [immigration](#), [George Washington](#) or [Barack Obama](#), here are ten ways to find useful, reliable materials for research on [NYTimes.com](#)." (June 1, 2009, Grades 6-8, 9-12)

Use this tool to research [News about American Indians](#), incl. commentary and archival articles published in The NYT.

Indigenous People

"Whether they are called tribal, Native, or Aboriginal peoples, First Nations, Adivasis, or American Indians, indigenous peoples are ethnic groups who have inhabited particular regions from ancient times. Another common term for these groups is "original inhabitants," because their residence in a place predates modern history.

As the authors in this issue of eJournal USA make clear, indigenous people worldwide have endured a long history of conquest and colonialism. Native peoples in many lands were decimated or wiped out by war and disease, relocated against their will, their children taken to boarding schools to inculcate "civilized" values. European settlers, for the most part, did not understand or recognize the very different value systems and worldviews of indigenous people in colonized lands. In recent decades a number of governments have acknowledged the damage done over centuries to their Native peoples and sought to redress past wrongs." ([INTRODUCTION](#) to the eJournal)

Links – Native Americans

- Library of Congress: [Native Americans](#)
- [Native American Rights Fund](#)
- [National Museum of the American Indian](#) - Collection relating to the indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere and Hawaii.

Links – Indigenous Peoples

- [Center for World Indigenous Studies](#)
- [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs](#)
- [UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger](#)

Did you know?

- "Native Americans served during the Revolutionary War and throughout the 19th century, almost exclusively in all-Indian units." ([National Archives and Records Administration](#))
- "Besides well-known European precedents — from Greece, Rome, and English common law, among others — indigenous American ideas of democracy have shaped the government of the United States." ([America.gov: EJournal USA "Indigenous People"](#))
- "UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing (the Atlas hereinafter) documents 2,279 languages in the world faced with different degrees of endangerment: 538 are critically endangered, the youngest speakers are elderly, and interaction in the given language is infrequent or rare." ([America.gov: EJournal USA "Indigenous People"](#))
- "At the time of European contact, there were an estimated 300 indigenous languages in North America that belonged to more than 50 language families." ([America.gov: EJournal USA "Indigenous People"](#))
- "Four major ideas are helpful for understanding the past and present situation of Native peoples. First, they have diverse cultures that are united in the concept that humans must be stewards of a living world. Second, individuals are defined by and are accountable to their tribal communities. Third, the trauma of the destructive encounters with European settlers has shaped who we are today. Finally, Native peoples' creative expressions, past and present, continue to contribute to global culture and science." ([America.gov: EJournal USA "Indigenous People"](#))
- "About 4 million people identify themselves as either being an American Indian or having American Indian ancestry. American Indians can be found across the country, and 70 percent do not live on reservations, the lands set aside by treaty for tribes. Many are intermarried with people of other ethnic and racial backgrounds, the highest rate of intermarriage among any ethnic group in the United States." ([America.gov: EJournal USA "Indigenous People"](#))

Teaching Material

EDSITEment: [Choosing Sides: The Native Americans' Role in the American Revolution](#): Native American groups had to choose the loyalist or patriot cause—or somehow maintain a neutral stance during the Revolutionary War. Students will analyze maps, treaties, congressional records, first-hand accounts, and correspondence to determine the different roles assumed by Native Americans in the American Revolution and understand why the various groups formed the alliances they did.

Use this tool to research [News about American Indians, including commentary and archival articles published in The New York Times](#).

Literature: Summer Reading

Ready to kick off your shoes and pack your suitcase? Whether you are getting ready to run to the nearest beach, or just prop your feet up and relax on your balcony, there's no better path to relaxation and renewal than one that leads you to run through the pages of a good book.

Recommendations for your summer reading list:

- Pick a classic you've never read but always meant to;
- Pick a book you've read and always wanted to reread but haven't yet;
- Pick a book outside the genres you usually read;
- Pick an "impulse" book that catches your eye during the summer;
- Pick a book from Nancy Pearl's recommendations.

Article

[Nicholas D. Kristof: The Best Kids' Books Ever](#): "So how will your kids spend this summer? Building sand castles at the beach? Swimming at summer camp? Shedding I.Q. points? In educating myself this spring about education, I was aghast to learn that American children drop in I.Q. each summer vacation — because they aren't in school or exercising their brains. This is less true of middle-class students whose parents drag them off to summer classes or make them read books. But poor kids fall two months behind in reading level each summer break, and that accounts for much of the difference in learning trajectory between rich and poor students. A mountain of research points to a central lesson: Pry your kids away from the keyboard and the television this summer, and get them reading. Let me help by offering my list of the Best Children's Books — Ever!" (*NYT, July 4, 2009*)

Summertime and Recreation

Teaching Material

TeacherVision: [Summer - Teacher Resources](#) - "Integrate the study of summer into your classroom curriculum; it's every student's favorite time of year. Summer brings heat, extended daylight, and fun. Topics of study include biomes, habitats, weather, and more. There are activities for every subject: mathematics, science, social studies, and art. We have slideshows of our favorite summer reading picks, math worksheets to keep your students engaged over the break, literature guides for summer-themed books [...], and more!"

Links

PBS Kids: [Summer Vacation](#)

Lesson Plan

Library of Congress: [When Work is Done](#) - Students develop albums that reflect a thesis about leisure time in the United States between 1900 and 1950.

Visiting the United States

If you have plans to visit the U.S. during the summer break, please take a look at USA.gov's [Travel, Transportation, and Recreation](#) page for help in making your plans. Some of the resources you'll find include:

- [Air Travel](#) – Find packing rules, real-time airport status, security tips...
- [Road and Train Travel](#) - Gas prices, road conditions, train travel...
- [International Travel](#) – Currency exchange rates, entry requirements, health information...
- [Recreation and Tourism](#) – Find maps and information about national parks, museums...

Don't Forget: ESTA – Electronic System for Travel Authorization

All nationals or citizens of [Visa Waiver Program \(VWP\)](#) countries who plan to travel to the United States for temporary business or pleasure will require, as of January 12, 2009, an approved [ESTA](#) prior to boarding a carrier to travel by air or sea to the United States under the VWP.

Travel and Tourism Sites for the 50 States and U.S. Territories

You'll see that the U.S. offers some of the most diverse destinations in the world. These state and territorial tourism web sites provide ideas for your vacations, meetings, and more.

Official Travel and Tourism Web site of the U.S.: [Discover America](#)

Sponsored by the Travel Industry Association (TIA) with support from the U.S. Department of Commerce, several of the State Tourism Offices and Convention and Visitors Bureaus, and leading travel industry partners, the site is an invitation call to explore the diverse destinations found throughout the USA.



© NPR:

[Summer Books 2009: The Complete Printable List](#)
[Independent Booksellers Pick Summer's Best Reads](#)

Librarian Nancy Pearl Picks Summer's Best Books

"Summer is a great time to cozy up with some good books, and, boy, do I have some fantastic suggestions for you! [The following](#) are a few of my favorite recent reads. Despite their differences of plot, settings and genre, what I love about each one of these books is the same: the voice of the narrator. These narrators are so compelling, so engaging, so real that I resented each moment I wasn't reading them. I hope you enjoy their company as much as I did." (NPR) [Listen Now](#)

Links

- Washington Post: [Books](#)
- The New York Times: [Books](#)
- Best Sellers: [Hardcover Fiction](#) | [Hardcover Nonfiction](#) | [Paperback Trade Fiction](#) | [Paperback Mass-Market Fiction](#)
- The New Yorker: [The Book Bench](#)
- Queens Library, The New York Library and Brooklyn Public Library: Summer Reading 2009 - [Teens Booklist](#)
- [Rebecca's Pocket: Summer 2009 Reading Lists](#)



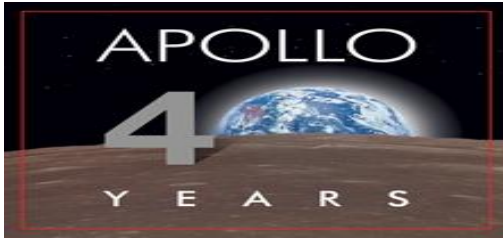
© NYT Learning Network: [Here](#) are ten quick, easy and engaging ways to celebrate summer using the resources of [NYTimes.com](#). Do you have to do [required summer reading](#) for school this year? Visit the [Book Review](#) for information on featured authors via the drop-down menu in the top right-hand column. Or read our recommendations for great beach books, from [2009](#) or from [other recent years](#).

The President's Vacation Plans?

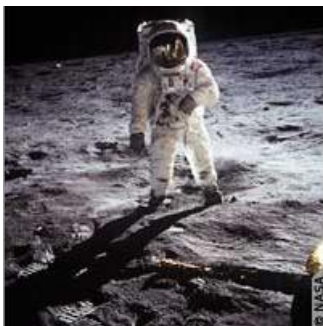
[President's Vacation: Not Much of a Secret](#) (*NYT, White House Memo by Jeff Zeleny, July 6, 2009*) The White House is busy preparing for Barack Obama's first summer getaway as president, as he and his family head off to [Martha's Vineyard](#).



© Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce: [Visitors Bureau](#)



President Obama Highlights Apollo Technologies
 (On April 26, 2009, National Academy of Science)
 "The Apollo program produced technologies that have improved kidney dialysis and water purification systems; sensors to test for hazardous gasses; energy-saving building materials; fire-resistant fabrics used by firefighters and soldiers. More broadly, the enormous investment in that era -- in science and technology, in education and research funding -- produced a great outpouring of curiosity and creativity, the benefits of which have been incalculable."



Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin stands on the moon, July 20, 1969.

In Focus: 40th Anniversary of First Moon Landing

Apollo 11 was the first manned mission to land on the Moon. The first steps by humans on another planetary body were taken by Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin on July 20, 1969. The astronauts also returned to Earth the first samples from another planetary body.

Blogs at America.gov: [Rumors, Myths and Fabrications Mythbusters Debunk Alleged Moon Landing Hoax](#) (By [Todd Leventhal](#), August 28, 2008): The popular Discovery Channel program "Mythbusters" debunked allegations that the U.S. Moon landings were faked, in an episode last summer. It pointed out that Apollo astronauts left several [retro-reflectors](#) on the Moon, which have been "pinged" with powerful lasers from Earth, sending a signal back. The mythbusters conducted elaborate [experiments](#) to debunk popular claims by hoax believers. An example: *Films of a flag flapping on the Moon mean there must have been wind blowing, but there's no atmosphere on the Moon.* - The mythbusters placed a replica American flag in a vacuum chamber, to test if a flag could flap in an environment with no atmosphere. They found that moving the flag's staff, as the astronauts did when they planted it in lunar soil, caused the flag to flap vigorously, as if it were being blown by a breeze.

Links

- NASA.gov: [Apollo 40th Anniversary](#) & [NASA History Division](#)
- [NASA Kids](#) & [NASA Science](#) Research Center Web site for young students
- NASA: [Current Missions](#)
- America.gov: [Science & Technology](#)
- National Air and Space Museum: [Apollo 11 – Lunar Landing Mission](#)

Teaching Material

- [NASA Quest Challenges](#) are FREE Web-based, interactive explorations designed to engage students in authentic scientific and engineering processes. The solutions relate to issues encountered daily by NASA personnel.

Co.NX Webchats - Enter the events



Conspiracy Theories

Join conspiracy theory analyst Todd Leventhal for a July 14 chat - Many people believe conspiracy theories about the September 11 attacks, the origin of AIDS, the Kennedy assassination, and other controversial subjects.

Where: <https://statedept.connectsolutions.com/conspiracy>

When: Tuesday, July 14 from 15:00-16:00

Hosted by the U.S. Dep. of State on Facebook.

FREE TECHNOLOGY SITES FOR TEACHERS

FREE TECHNOLOGY SITES FOR TEACHERS

- A review of free technology resources and how teachers can use them. Ideas for technology integration in education.

Not only will you learn about new technology through this website, you will also learn more broadly and perhaps more importantly how it is being applied creatively by educators. Take a look!



usa.usembassy.de

About the USA is a digital collection of background resources on American society, culture, and political processes. In addition to featuring selected websites, it provides access to documents in full text format (E-Texts) on topics ranging from the history of German-American relations, government and politics to travel, holidays and sports.

This newsletter is produced by the Information Resource Centers/U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Germany.

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